

# BELLA COOLA DEICTIC USAGE

by Philip W. Davis and Ross Saunders

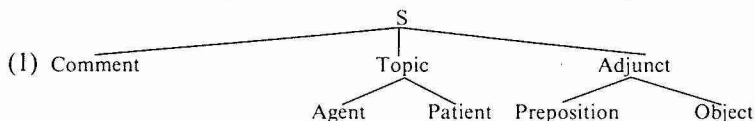
*In this paper we examine the function of a set of deictic elements that occur in prefix-suffix pairs in Bella Coola. The semantics of the pairs is reviewed; then the occurrence of suffixes without prefixes and of prefixes without suffixes is examined. Suffixes occur with Comments to express the deixis of events. Suffixes elsewhere serve as pronouns. The prefixes indicate indefiniteness.*

KEY WORDS: Salish, Bella Coola, deixis, semantics, usage

## I

Bella Coola is an isolated Salishan language spoken on the central coast of British Columbia, Canada. At present there remain somewhat fewer than two hundred fluent speakers of the language. Bella Coola deixis has been discussed by Newman (1935 and 1969) and by Davis and Saunders (1973 and 1974a).<sup>1</sup> In this paper we again take up the subject of deixis in Bella Coola to discuss a range of deictic expression via affixation.

Deixis expresses, in relative space and time, the location of referents of utterance elements. The variable point for the determination of those spatial and temporal values is the place and time of the speech act. The referents of linguistic elements located in that space and time are those of the Comment, Agent, Patient, and prepositional Object of a sentence. The structure of a simple sentence in Bella Coola is represented in (1):



The Patient and Adjunct constituents are optional. The Agent and Patient express the given information of a sentence, while the Comment adds new information of the Topic.<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, the following sentences:<sup>3</sup>

(2) ʔ'ap ti-ʔimlk-tx

'The man is going'

(3) ʔimlk ti-ʔ'ap-tx

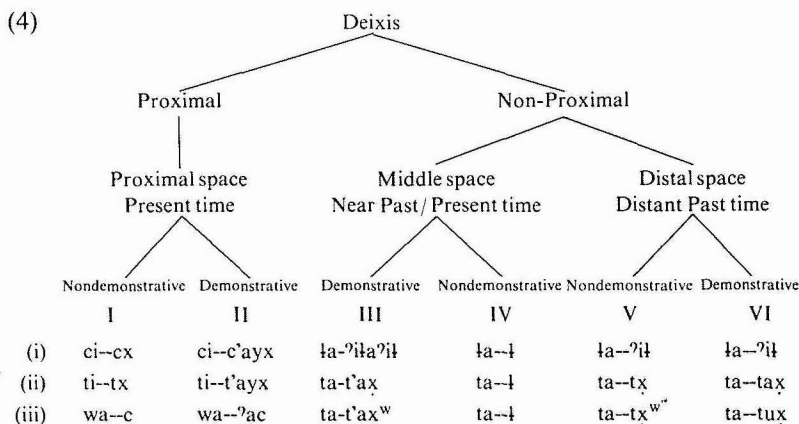
'The one [who is] going is  
a man.'

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In (2) the Comment is the Verb  $\lambda'ap$  'go'; the Agent is the Noun  $?imlk$  'man.' In (3) the Noun is the Comment, while the Verb is the Agent. The two sentences are not paraphrases; (2) answers the question 'What is the man doing?' and (3) answers 'Who is going?' Thus, in (2)  $\lambda'ap$  'go' is the new information or Comment, and  $?imlk$  'man' functions in the same way in (3). The Comment, Topic, and Object constituents all occupy deictic spatial and temporal locus. The spatio-temporal deixis of each does not necessarily agree.

## II

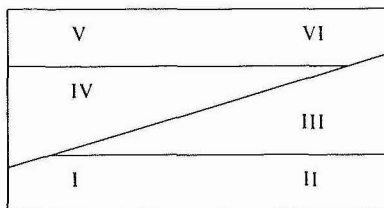
Nouns typically manifest Agents, Patients, or Objects. For our purposes here we may identify Nouns as those lexical items that have fixed gender.<sup>4</sup> They occur with the set of deictic affixes shown in example (4).



Row (4i) consists of the deictic affixes of Singular Feminine Nouns; (4ii) is composed of those of Singular Nonfeminine Nouns (Masculine and Inanimate). Row (4iii) consists of the deictic affixes of Plural Nouns. No distinction between genders is made in the Plural.

A schematic distribution of deictic space is given in (5).

(5)



Speaker Location

I and II denote visible space near the conversation. The space of II is closest to the conversation and includes the participants. The space of I extends outward from II to a point where—if the referent is human—conversation is possible with raised voice but without shouting. Visible space beyond II is the zone of the Middle, III affixes. Its distant boundaries are determined only by physical constraints on vision. The Middle space of IV is invisible, and in absolute terms may be quite near the conversation, e.g., in the next room, around the corner of the house, and so on. It extends outward in an apparently irregular fashion. To understand the boundaries it is first necessary to describe the immediate geography of the Bella Coola reserve. The reserve lies in a valley that is only three to four miles across at its widest point and is approximately eighty miles in length. The valley runs east-west, and the Bella Coola River, which flows through it, empties into the Burke Channel, which in turn opens to the Pacific Ocean sixty miles further west. The present reserve lies approximately two miles above the mouth of the river. The outer boundaries of invisible Middle space extend to the sides of the valley, defined by mountains that range in height from four to eight thousand feet. To the west, the boundary is the mouth of the Bella Coola River. To the east, invisible Middle space extends to a point just beyond Hagensborg, a settlement ten miles from the reserve. The irregular shape of invisible Middle space is puzzling until the location of earlier Bella Coola settlements within the valley is considered. McIlwraith (1948) records twenty-six of these villages, of which twenty-two lie (or would lie if they still existed) in what is now the domain of invisible Middle space. The remaining four were scattered in the eastmost sixty-five miles of the valley; they would lie in Distal space. Invisible Middle space appears to coincide with the area of earlier dense settlement. The contemporary Bella Coola term for the entire valley is *nuxalk*. McIlwraith (1948:11) cites Boas as noting that in the late nineteenth century *nuxalk* denoted *only* the lower settlements and hence also coincided with the domain of the IV affixes. McIlwraith (1948:11) writes that "All the writer's [McIlwraith's] information was contrary to this [Boas's] view." The deictic system of Bella Coola, however, confirms Boas's earlier observation. The spatial domain of the Distal V and VI affixes is invisible and lies beyond III and IV in all directions.

Deictic affixes place the referents in relative space with respect to the space of the speech act. The use of one or another affixal set in an utterance implies that the deictic claim thus made is true by virtue of the speaker's witnessing of the referent at that place with respect to the speech act. And, indeed, any declarative utterance in Bella Coola implies that the speaker has witnessed what he reports. Where this is not so, a verbal suffix *-kʷ* is normally used to indicate that the speaker is reporting what he has been told but has not himself seen.<sup>5</sup> It follows from this that each

of the sets of deictic affixes contains a temporal component. Since the witnessing of I and II is contemporary with the speech act, the time of the Proximal affixes is Present. If a speaker affixes a member of set IV to a Noun, it implies that his witnessing of the Noun referent occurred in what is now invisible Middle space with respect to the current speech act. Since the observation must have occurred in what is now the space of IV, a span of time is required for the observation situation to be converted to the speech act situation with the referent in invisible Middle space. Since nominal deixis says nothing about how a given deictic situation is accomplished, but only that it exists, the transition from observation situation to speech act situation may come about in more than one way. For example, if the speaker has witnessed the referent, say, a man, in what is now, from the reference point of the conversation, invisible Middle space (e.g., next door), and then moved to the location of the speech act, the IV affixes may be used. Alternatively, the speaker may have viewed the referent at the location of the speech act (i.e., Proximal space); but since the IV affixes are used, it must be the man and not the speaker who has moved. In either instance the deictic space coincides with a deictic past time. The time of invisible Middle space is earlier the same day of the conversation: Near Past time.

The visible Middle affixes of III indicate either a past or present time. This is by virtue of their Middle distance combined with visibility. If a speaker witnesses a referent at a location and then moves so that that location and referent are in visible Middle space with respect to the speech act, then the time reference of the III affixes is past, specifically Near Past, just the amount of time required to travel the distance. If the speaker witnesses a referent in visible Middle space at the time of the speech act without himself having been at that distant location, the time of visible Middle space is present. Thus

- (6) cp-is ta-ʔimlk-t'aṣ ta-q'wṣ'wumtimut-t'aṣ  
(wipe-he/it man car)

can mean literally 'I was over there where that man whom we now see is, and he was at that time wiping the car' or simply 'That man wiped that car.' Example (6) can also mean 'I see that man over there, and he is, while we look at him, wiping that car' or simply 'That man is wiping that car.'

The V and VI affixes both imply Distant Past time. That is, referents witnessed beyond Middle space are assumed to have been witnessed yesterday or before with respect to the speech act.

The deictic time component is independent of the deictic spatial component. This can be seen in utterances where either component, space or time, is neutralized. Sentence (7),



- (7) k'x-is ti-ʔimlk-tx ʔa-xnas-ʔil      'The man saw the woman'  
 (see-he/her man woman)

can be used when the man is presently in the space of I, i.e., the speaker and listener see him while talking; and the woman is in the space of V. The point in time at which the man and woman occupied the same space so that the Comment 'seeing' could be executed is inferred to lie at or precede that of the most distant deictic specification of either Agent or Patient. Since this is the Distant Past time of *ʔa--ʔil*, the Comment is inferred to have been executed in the Distant Past. If, however, the conversation is about a woman the interlocutors know to have been in the vicinity of the speech act, i.e., not in Distal space, the V affixes *ʔa--ʔil* are still appropriate. But here Distal space must be neutralized. This leaves Distant Past distinctive, in turn implying Distant Past performance of the event. The time component of deixis can be similarly neutralized leaving space distinctive. Should A report to B that he has just seen a person from outside Middle space who is now within invisible Middle space, A may say:

- (8) k'x-ʔ-ic ta-nanus-tum-tx ʔal-a-stua-c  
 (see-IV-I/him Nanus-called at-store)

'I saw this day the person called Nanus at the store.' With distinctive space and nondistinctive Distant Past time, the V affixes on *nanustum* indicate a Distal intrusion into the area of settlement, a visitor. The co-occurrence of *ʔa--tx* with the Near Past verbal affix *-ʔ-* shows that the Distant time component of *ʔa--tx* is neutralized. Elsewhere they contradict each other semantically, and their co-occurrence results in unacceptable sentences; for example,

- (9) \*k'x-ʔ-ic ta-ʔimlk-tx ʔal-stuix

is incorrect. Stue is one of the four villages lying beyond Middle space.

Analogous neutralization occurs with the invisible Middle affixes. Neutralized time indicates a normally Middle space located referent now outside Middle space. If A has a next-door neighbor who has been working in Stue for a month and whom he has not seen for that period, A may say:

- (10) ksnmak ta-ʔimlk-ʔ ʔal-stuix      'The man is working at Stue'

implying present time; the Near Past time of IV must be neutralized. Distinctive Middle space and non-distinctive time is appropriate *only* for residents of Middle space outside that locus; that is, the man in (10) cannot be a stranger to the speaker nor a resident of Stue. If A says:

- (11) k'x-ʔ-ic ta-ʔimlk-ʔ ʔal-stuix ʔal-taynax"  
 (see-IV-I/him man at-Stue at-this morning)

'I saw the man at Stuié this morning,' then deictic space is neutralized and deictic Near Past time is distinctive. Because deictic space is neutralized *taʔimlkɩ* can, and does, indicate a person from Middle space observed in Distal space *or* a normal occupant or resident of Distal space (if seen this day by the speaker). Sentence (11) is then used in place of the incorrect (9).

In the visible Middle and Proximal affixes, space but not time can be neutralized. Thus, if A visits B to find Nanus there, then after Nanus's departure but while he remains in the consciousness of A and B, i.e., is present to them but spatially absent, A may inquire

- (12) ʔaɩnap-ix<sup>w</sup>-a ti-ʔimlk-tx                      'Do you know the man?'  
           (know-you/him-question man)

The temporal limit of the appropriateness of (12) is approximately ten to fifteen minutes. Beyond that A would have to ask

- (13) ʔaɩnap-ix<sup>w</sup>-a ta-ʔimlk-ɩ.

The II affixes so used imply immediate departure from the place of the conversation but presence within the house; III implies immediate departure outside the house. The neutralization of Proximal space or the Middle space of III also functions in the expression of discourse reference; this use is recognized by speakers as 'just talking about it.'

An account of the usage of the deictic pairs of (4) and the relation of this usage to culturally determined presupposition is to be found in Davis and Saunders (1974a). The remainder of this paper follows from the observation that the members of the deictic pairs of (4) may occur independently of their partners. It is that occurrence to which we now turn, discussing first the suffixes without co-occurring prefixes.

### III

The system of nominal deixis that was briefly described in section II may be used to imply the time of execution of a Comment. Where no affixation with temporal implication occurs with the Comment, the time of the Comment is inferred from the nominal deixis as in (7). In any case, nominal deixis does not express where (relatively) the Comment was executed. The deictic suffixes of (4) attached to Comments place the realization of that linguistic element in deictic space and time independently of nominal deixis. There is no verbal affix in Bella Coola that solely marks time.

Let us begin with the examination of some sentences. The suffixes of I, IV, and V occur with Comments to specify their deictic realization:

- (14) cituma-tx                                      'He is sleeping'  
       (15) cituma-ɩ                                   'He/she was sleeping'  
       (16) cituma-tɣ                                'He is/was sleeping.'

In (14) a speaker, A, may be sitting next to a window, may observe someone outside and relate that observation to B while A continues to look at the referent. Or if A witnesses the person asleep and B is in another room, A may go there and relate to B what he has seen. The essential in each interpretation is that B does not observe or has not observed what A saw. Two other conditions must obtain for (14) to be used correctly. First, the utterance must be made while A observes or immediately after that observation. This recalls the neutralized usage of I described above. Here, *-tx* functions in that way with Proximal (visible) space neutralized and with Present time distinctive. If A is not looking at the individual when he utters (14), he cannot wait too long if (14) is to be appropriate; this in turn implies that the event must occur within a short distance from the locus of the conversation. That distance generally coincides with the space of I described above. This is the second condition for the correctness of (14). The occurrence of *-tx* suffixed to Comments then means deictic Present time with respect to the speaker's observation of that event. This in turn implies deictic proximity of the Comment referent.

Sentence (15) is compatible with the whole range of deictic space of (5) with the appropriate neutralizations. Used of a referent event in invisible Middle space, it implies that the speaker witnessed the event in that space. Since by definition the utterance of (15) is made outside that space, the speaker's observation of the event of 'sleeping' lies in Near Past time. But *-l-* is not itself a past tense marker. It does not mean that the person was asleep and is now awake. It places the witnessing of the sleeping in deictic space and time and thus implies nothing of whether the observed individual is now asleep or awake. It says only that when the speaker was in what is now invisible Middle space, he observed someone to be asleep. Because of the time lapse implicit in moving from the space of IV to that of II, where the conversation occurs, the English past tense *gloss* 'was' is appropriate.

The *-l-* suffix on Comments can also be used with either deictic Middle space or deictic Near Past time neutralized. Used of an event in Proximal space, *-l-* implies that the speaker observed the occurrence in the Near Past prior to the arrival of the interlocutor and is reporting to one who was not a witness. Here, deictic Near Past time is distinctive; deictic Middle space is not. The *-l-* suffix can, however, be used when a shorter time span is involved. Let us assume A and B are walking along a street, that B has a message for Nanus and walks into Nanus's house as A and B pass it. A waits outside to ask B if he saw Nanus. B responds with (17):

(17) ?ik'ax<sup>w</sup>. cituma-l

'No. He was sleeping.'

B's response is correct even if he immediately returns, but the use of *-l-* contradicts the required time lapse of the Near Past. The temporal component is neutralized in (17) leaving spatial deixis distinctive. Distinctive

(18) ʔik'ax<sup>w</sup>. cituma-tx 'No. He is sleeping.'

With the existence of modern technology, it is possible to use the *-t* suffix for events witnessed beyond Middle space. If B witnesses Nanus in Vancouver and returns by air later the same day to Bella Coola, the following conversation is possible:

- Here, deictic space is neutralized and Near Past time is distinctive.

(20) \*cituma-tx ta-ʔimlk-tx ʔaʔ-stuix

(recalling that Stuie is in Distal space from Bella Coola) are incorrect. In (16) it is immaterial whether or not the listener witnessed the event, and (16) can be used when both interlocutors are observing an individual in Proximal space. This usage indicates that Distant Past time is neutralized and that Distal space remains distinctive. This combination in nominal usage, e.g., (8), implies a stranger or visitor in non-Distal space. This same semantic circumstance in combination with a Comment as in (16) implies surprise; that is, the speaker has just come upon a person he expected to

find awake, but who in fact is asleep. The semantic property uniting the variant meanings of Distal space in the *-tx* suffix may be the 'unknownness' that visitors and unexpected events have in common. This complements the 'knownness' of *-t-* noted above.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the Nondemonstrative Comment suffixes of (14)-(16), utterances occur with the Demonstrative ones:

(21) *cituma-t'ayx*

(22) *cituma-t'aṣ*

(23) *cituma-ya-taṣ*.

In the first, the Proximal Demonstrative suffix is appropriate for a situation in which A and B enter a room, A entering first followed by B, and A sees someone asleep. B, because he is behind A, has not yet seen the person. A utters (21) while looking at the individual sleeping there or while turning his head to B. The essential factors are the close proximity reflected by the II suffix and the fact that B has not yet seen what is reported to him. The Comment suffixes *-tx* and *-t'ayx* differ only in the relative deictic distance from the conversation that each denotes. The difference coincides with the spatial distinction between the affixal sets of I and II in (4).

In (22) the speaker is reporting an event he, but not the listener, observed or presently observes in a space that would be visible Middle space, III in (4), if both speaker and listener stepped to the closest point where both could see. Sentence (23) denotes speaker surprise as the Nondemonstrative V suffix does in (16). If A and B pass someone on the street and walk a few paces further, (23) is appropriate: 'Was that man *sleeping*?'

One last deictic suffixal combination is possible with Comments:

(24) *cituma-t-t ti-ʔimlk-tx* 'The man used to be sleeping'

(25) *ciq'w-t-t ti-pakayala-tx* 'The box used to be broken'

(26) *lq-t-t ti-mna-c-tx* 'My son used to be wet'

(27) *sp'-t-t-is ti-ʔimlk-tx* 'The man used to hit the  
ci-xnas-cx woman.'

In each sentence the state or event occurred in Near or Distant Past time, but the predication is specifically not now in force. This suffixation is compatible with all deictic spaces. The *-t-* suffix can be interpreted in each occurrence as the *-t-* suffix from the IV set in (4). The doubling functions as a double negative may in English; for example, in

(28) The book wasn't never read

the implication may be that the book was in fact read. This is the case with

sentences (24)-(27). In (24) the man 'was (was sleeping)' and hence is now awake. In (25) the box 'was (was broken)' but is now repaired and so forth.

In each instance of deictic Comment suffixation above, the suffix agrees in gender and number with the Agent of the sentence. In transitive sentences such as

(29) sp'-is-tx ti-ʔimlk-tx ci-xnas-cx

the alternative, with feminine suffix,

(30) \*sp'-is-cx ti-ʔimlk-tx ci-xnas-cx

is incorrect unless, of course, the Agent and Patient are reversed:

(31) sp'-is-cx ci-xnas-cx ti-ʔimlk-tx.

The choice of a suffix from a series, say, -cx, -tx, or -c from I, is a mechanical one of gender-number agreement and in itself does not alter the deixis of the Comment.

Sentences occur in Bella Coola that consist of Comments alone. In such utterances the Agent (and Patient if the sentence is transitive) are non-demonstrative pronominals; for example,

(32) k'x-is

can mean 'He sees it,' 'He sees her,' 'He sees him,' 'She sees it,' etc. Sentences of this type occur as well with the Comment suffixes:

(33) (i) k'x-is-tx

(ii) k'x-is-t'ayx

(34) (i) k'x-ɬ-is

(ii) k'x-is-t'aɣ

(35) (i) k'x-is-tɣ

(ii) k'x-is-a-taɣ.

In each case the deictic suffix agrees with the Agent in gender and number, here Singular Nonfeminine. Sentence

(36) sp'-is-cx ti-ʔimlk-tx

can only mean 'She hit the man.'

In addition to the surface Agentless and Patientless sentences in which underlying nondemonstrative pronouns, functioning as Agent and Patient, have been deleted, there occur sentences in which the Agent and Patient are demonstrative pronouns. This introduces a second use of the deictic suffixes. In such sentences, the Demonstrative deictic suffixes (sets II, III, and VI) function as demonstrative pronouns:

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| (37) ʔ'ap t'ayx | 'This one is going'   |
| (38) ʔ'ap t'ax  | 'That one is going'   |
| (39) ʔ'ap-a tax | 'Was that one going.' |

Sentences such as (37) with demonstrative Agents differ from those with nondemonstrative pronoun Agents, but with deictic Comment suffixation, in that the former can be uttered when both speaker and listener observe the event; the latter may not. There, only the speaker observes or has observed the event. Such sentences may be homophonous, but they remain grammatically distinct:

- (40) (i) ʔ'ap t'ayx  
 (ii) ʔ'ap-t'ayx.

Where the deictic suffixes occur as demonstrative pronouns, the semantics of nominal deixis is carried over into the pronouns so that (38) is deictically analogous to (41):

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| (41) ʔ'ap ta-ʔimlk-t'ax | 'That man is going.' |
|-------------------------|----------------------|

This analogy between nominal and pronominal deixis also implies that such utterances as

- (42) ʔ'ap

should be syntactic neutralizations of the *underlying* (but not surface) representations:

- |                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (43) (i) ʔ'ap tx | 'He is going'                     |
| (ii) ʔ'ap cx     | 'She is going'                    |
| (iii) ʔ'ap ɬ     | 'He/she went (this day)'          |
| (iv) ʔ'ap tx     | 'He went (yesterday or before)'   |
| (v) ʔ'ap ʔiɬ     | 'She went (yesterday or before).' |

And (42) is ambiguous in this way; it has all the glosses of (43). The surface sentences (14)-(16) superficially resemble (43), but the Comment suffixes in the former set do not derive from the underlying sequences of (43). This can be readily shown by such utterances as (44):

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (44) (i) cituma-ɬ ti-ʔimlk-t'ayx | 'This man was sleeping' |
| (ii) cituma-tx ta-ʔimlk-ɬ        | 'The man is sleeping'   |

where the Agent and Comment deixis differs.





overtly as a prepositional Object, as it does not appear as Agent or Patient. The formal gap produced by *\*ʔaɫ-l* and so forth is filled by extending *ʔaɫ-tx*. Consider

- (49) (i)  $\lambda'$ ap-ɫ-nu-a ʔaɫ-ta-ʔimlk-ɫ      'Did you go with the man'  
 (ii) *\*ʔaw*.  $\lambda'$ ap-ɫ-c ʔaɫ-ɫ  
 (iii) ʔaw.  $\lambda'$ ap-ɫ-c ʔaɫ-tx      'Yes. I went with him.'

Geographic locations are deictically plural in Bella Coola:

- (50) (i) wa-suɫ-c      'the house'  
 (ii) *\*ti*-suɫ-tx  
 (51) (i) wa-cimilt-c      'the valley'  
 (ii) *\*ti*-cimilt-tx  
 (52) (i) wa-sulut-c      'the ocean'  
 (ii) *\*ti*-sulut-tx  
 (53) (i) wa-ʔanux<sup>w</sup>um-c      'the river'  
 (ii) *\*ti*-ʔanux<sup>w</sup>um-tx.

These participate in Comment suffixation as other Nouns do; for example,

- (54)      ya-c wa-suɫ-c      'The house is good'

implies the speaker has just inspected a nearby house without the accompaniment of the listener and has returned to pronounce it in good condition. The plurality of place is also reflected in the grammar where locations are pronominally designated:

- (55)      ya ʔac      'This place is good'  
 (56)      ya t'ax<sup>w</sup>      'That place is good'  
 (57)      ya-ya tux      'Was that place good.'

Syntactically, inanimates are singular; hence, *ya* in (54)-(57) and not *ya-naw*.<sup>9</sup>

The plural deictic suffixes may denote location as prepositional Objects in the same way as when functioning as Agent or Patient. In this usage the Nondemonstrative deictic suffixes (with the exception of *-ɫ* that is replaced by *-c*) are present overtly as prepositional Objects in the surface representation as they are when not indicating place as in (49ii). Let us begin by considering these sentences:

- (58) (i) ʔayaɫ ti-ʔimlk-tx x-tx<sup>w</sup>      'The man is going via that way'  
 (ii) ʔayaɫ ti-ʔimlk-tx ʔaɫ-tx<sup>w</sup>      'The man is going through there'



space, but not always in the Distant Past; or 'here' in Proximal space, but not always in the Present time. The following short conversations illustrate some of those pronominalizations. The (ii) responses are those in which spatial and temporal deixis agrees with the antecedent. The (iii) responses are those which agree spatially, but not temporally, e.g., 'here, yesterday.' It is the (iii) alternatives which show that variation in deictic time is possible in the pronominalization of place. The reverse, with deictic spatial variation, does not occur because of the nature of pronominalization. Identity is required for this process, here, spatial identity; and where that identity is absent, no correct pronominalization is possible. This is exactly analogous to the incorrectness of 'Yes, he's there' in answer to 'Is the chairman in town?' The conversations occur between A and B in the latter's house. Snac is a next door neighbor. Cumūl is a village in invisible Middle space; Stue is in Distal space.

- (61) (i) A: ksnmak-a ta-snac ʔal-a-suł-nu-ʔac 'Is Snac working at your house'  
 (ii) B: ksnmak ʔal-a-ʔac<sup>11</sup> 'He's working here'  
 (iii) B: ksnmak ʔał-tx<sup>w</sup> 'He was working here'
- (62) (i) A: ksnmak-a ta-snac ʔal-a-suł-s-c 'Is Snac working at his house'  
 (ii) B: ksnmak ʔał-c 'He's working there'  
 (iii) B: ksnmak ʔał-tx<sup>w</sup> 'He was working there'
- (63) (i) A: ksnmak-a ta-snac ʔał-cumūl 'Is Snac working at Cumūl'  
 (ii) B: ksnmak ʔał-c 'He's working there'  
 (iii) B: ksnmak ʔał-tx<sup>w</sup> 'He was working there'
- (64) (i) A: ksnmak-a ta-snac ʔał-stuix 'Is Snac working at Stue'  
 (ii) B: ksnmak ʔał-tx<sup>w</sup> 'He was working there'  
 (iii) B: ksnmak ʔał-c 'He's working there.'

Sentences (61) and (62) involve locations in Proximal space; (61) is in the space of the II affixes, and (62) in the space of the I affixes. Responses (61ii) and (62ii) deictically agree with the space-time of their respective antecedents; ʔalaʔac means 'here, now,' and ʔałc means 'there [next door], now.' As long as the deictic spatial identity is maintained, deictic time may vary in pronominalization of place. The alternative answers (61iii) and (62iii) show this temporal variation. The time of -tx<sup>w</sup> is Distant Past; and

(61iii) and (62iii) accordingly mean 'He was working here yesterday or before' and 'He was working there yesterday or before,' respectively. In each case, such meanings appear only in the context of discourse. In (63ii) the Middle Nondemonstrative *-l-* is replaced by the Proximal Nondemonstrative *-c*, an alternation noted above. Otherwise, the observations made of (61) and (62) extend to (63). In (64) it is *ʔal-c* that exhibits temporal variation to mean 'there, now,' and the response *ʔal-tx<sup>w</sup>* in (64ii) exhibits space-time agreement with the antecedent.

Similar pronominalizations and variations in deictic time occur with *x-*:

- (65) (i) A: *ʔayał-a ta-snac ʔal-a-suł-nu-ʔac*<sup>12</sup> 'Is Snac going by your house'  
 (ii) B: *ʔayał x-ʔac* 'He's going by here'  
 (iii) B: *ʔayał x-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'He went by here'
- (66) (i) A: *ʔayał-a ta-snac ʔal-a-suł-s-c* 'Is Snac going by his house'  
 (ii) B: *ʔayał x-c* 'He's going by there'  
 (iii) B: *ʔayał x-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'He went by there'
- (67) (i) A: *ʔayał-a ta-snac ʔal-cumūł* 'Is Snac going by Cumūł'  
 (ii) B: *ʔayał x-c* 'He's going by there'  
 (iii) B: *ʔayał x-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'He went by there'
- (68) (i) A: *ʔayał-a ta-snac ʔal-stuix* 'Is Snac going by Stuie'  
 (ii) B: *ʔayał x-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'He went by there'  
 (iii) B: *ʔayał x-c* 'He's going by there.'

The Prepositions *ʔal-* and *x-* also function in the pronominalization of time expressions; and there we find a purely temporal deictic function:

- (69) (i) A: *ł'ap-nu-a ʔal-tunixa* 'Did you go yesterday'  
 (ii) B: *ł'ap-c ʔal-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'I went then'
- (70) (i) A: *ł'ap-nu-a kaynuxs* 'Are you going tomorrow'  
 (ii) B: *ł'ap-c ʔal-tx<sup>w</sup>* 'I'm going then'
- (71) (i) A: *ł'ap-ł-nu-a ʔal-taynax<sup>w</sup>* 'Did you go this morning'  
 (ii) B: *ł'ap-ł-c* 'I went'

- (iii) B:  $\lambda'$ ap-l-c  $\text{?al-taynax}^w$  'I went this morning'
- (72) (i) A:  $\lambda'$ ap-nu-a  $\text{?al-ti-sunx}^w$ -t<sup>13</sup> 'Are you going today'
- (ii) B:  $\lambda'$ ap-c x-c 'I'm going then'
- (iii) B:  $\lambda'$ ap-c x- $\text{?ac}$  'I'm going now.'

In (69) and (70),  $-tx^w$  in  $\text{?alt}x^w$  expresses the Distant Past time of yesterday and also the Distant time of tomorrow. The suffix  $-c$  in (72ii) expresses same day time following the conversation. The  $-l$  suffix that we might expect in this function is replaced here as elsewhere by a Proximal Nondemonstrative form. The 'now' of  $x\text{?ac}$  in (72iii) is the Proximal 'now' that immediately follows the conversation. The Demonstrative suffix  $-\text{?ac}$  functions as the Demonstrative suffix on  $ti\text{-?imlk-t'ayx}$  when used of a person who has just stepped into another room. The time spans are comparable. The  $-c$  suffix on  $x-c$  matches the time span of both the Nondemonstrative suffix of  $ti\text{-?imlk-tx}$  when the person has been gone ten to fifteen minutes and the Nondemonstrative suffix of  $ta\text{-?imlk-l}$  when the man has been gone a longer period. We may consider  $xc$  to be a syncretism of  $xc$  and  $*xl$ .

Two further comments are required of (69)-(72). First, Distant time, both past and future, is expressed with the Preposition  $\text{?al-}$ . Near time is expressed with  $x-$ . This accords with the Distal:Proximal distinction. The use of  $\text{?al-}$  and  $x-$  for points of time agrees with their common Static component. Spans of time are expressed with the Nonstatic  $\text{?ul-}$  and  $wixH-$ . The second comment concerns (71). There is apparently no pronominalization of Near Past time, i.e., then (this morning), in Bella Coola. We have no explanation for this.

Pronominalization of time spans are illustrated by the following sentences:

- (73) (i) A:  $ya\ ti\text{-?imlk-tx}\ \text{?ul-a-?al-tunixa}^{14}$  'The man was good until yesterday'
- (ii) B:  $\text{?aw. ya}\ \text{?ul-tx}^w$  'Yes. He was good until then'
- (74) (i) A:  $ya\ ti\text{-?imlk-tx}\ \text{?ul-a-?al-taynax}^w$  'The man was good until this morning'
- (ii) B:  $\text{?aw. ya}\ \text{?ul-c}$  'Yes. He was good until then'
- (75) (i) A:  $ya\text{-ma}\ ti\text{-?imlk-tx}\ \text{?ul-a-?al-ti-sunx}^w$ -t 'Maybe the man will be good until today'
- (ii) B:  $\text{?aw. ya}\text{-ma}\ \text{?ul-c}$  'Yes. Maybe he'll be good until then'



The function of Proximal deictic prefixation is to mark a referent the speaker has not witnessed. Recalling that deictic suffixation specifies the relative spatio-temporal circumstance of that witnessing, the absence of deictic suffixation coincides with the absence of witnessing. Hence

(80) \*ksnmak ti-ʔimlk

is unacceptable because declarative utterances presuppose—as noted in section II—speaker witness; but this contradicts *tiʔimlk*, that expresses the claim the speaker has never seen the man. While (80) is incorrect, (81) is acceptable:<sup>15</sup>

(81) ksnmak-kʷ ti-ʔimlk

literally, 'I am told the man, whom I have not seen, is working.' This property of Proximal deictic prefixation makes such expression otherwise appropriate only to questions and negative answers. We find the following contrasts in acceptability:

- |          |                          |                              |
|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| (82) (i) | kʰx-ixʷ-a ti-ḷʰmsta-tx   | 'Do you see the person'      |
| (ii)     | kʰx-ixʷ-a ti-ḷʰmsta      | 'Have you seen the person'   |
| (83) (i) | kʰx-ic ti-ḷʰmsta-tx      | 'I see the person'           |
| (ii)     | *kʰx-ic ti-ḷʰmsta        |                              |
| (84) (i) | ʔaxʷ kʰx-ic ti-ḷʰmsta-tx | 'I don't see the person'     |
| (ii)     | ʔaxʷ kʰx-ic ti-ḷʰmsta    | 'I haven't seen the person.' |

Such questions as (82ii) are not acceptable in isolation or as the first utterance in a discourse. This unacceptability is not a grammatical one. Nouns are constrained by deictic suffixation to a particular class. Without this, the referents are generic unless the discourse context, functioning as deixis, constrains the generic class to some subclass under discussion. Outside this context and without deictic suffixation, *kʰxixʷa tiḷʰmsta* is as meaningful in Bella Coola as 'Have you seen man?' is in English. The Bella Coola unacceptability goes a step further than the English, implying that the speaker has not witnessed an instantiation of this generic class. The presupposition that interlocutors have witnessed the generic classes renders the contextless (82ii) nonsense. The acceptability of (79) results from the fact that the generic class of sons is not involved, but 'my [the speaker's] son,' whom there is no absolute presuppositional basis for expecting the speaker to have seen, given the context of (79). Utterances containing Nouns without deictic suffixation are correct only if constrained—by discourse context or grammatically—to a class the speaker may reasonably be presupposed not to have witnessed.

The *ta-* prefix used alone similarly implies the absence of the referent. But unlike the *ti-* prefix used alone, it does not imply that the speaker has never seen the referent. The *ta-* prefix is used of known referents, that is, those that belong to Middle and Proximal space, when specification of them is made without the speaker implying information of his deictic, spatio-temporal witnessing of them. Bella Coola then provides a way in which a speaker may deal with familiar quantities without committing himself to expressing a space-time relationship with the referent. The absence of this deictic witnessing is again directly expressed in the absence of the deictic suffixes.

As with *ti-* prefixation, the class of possible referents, say, *mna* 'son,' must be constrained to a subclass of possible sons. Since this is not done by deictic suffixation, some other means is required, e.g., possession, *ta-mna-nu*, literally 'your son, whom I know, but of whom I now make no claim of having witnessed in deictic space-time.' The absence of deictic suffixation that would express the location of the referent intrudes an uncertainty that is glossed in English as 'happened':

- |      |                    |                               |
|------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| (85) | k'x-ɬ-ic ta-mna-nu | 'I happened to see your son.' |
|------|--------------------|-------------------------------|

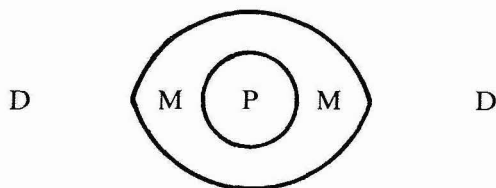
Because *ta-* lacks the 'never seen' implication of *ti-*, declarative statements such as (85) are not self-contradictory.

v

Deixis in any language is a difficult phenomenon to comprehend in its entirety, and the description of Bella Coola deictic usage above is surely incomplete. But there is one feature of the deictic system that merits some speculation by way of conclusion. That is the close bond between deictic space and time. Our description has assumed them to be separate co-functioning primitives within the deictic system, but the degree to which that distinction is a property of Bella Coola deixis itself or a property an English speaker brings to the deictic system is unclear. It is certainly possible that Bella Coola deixis functions with a single 'space-time.' Only a single affixal group, (4), is ever used, and no *formal* distinction exists between deictic space and time. Under this unitary view, there would be no neutralizations. There would exist a single space-time with three values (Proximal, Middle, and Distal); these would be variously manifest (interpreted or expressed) as observational space or time (observational in the sense that phonetics may be observational) depending upon the Proximal, Middle, or Distal witnessing of the referent with respect to the space-time of the utterance. Such a space-time continuum might be segmented in the manner diagrammed in (86).



(86)



The speaker at the time of the utterance is always within P(roximal). The interpretation of D(istal), for example, would be expressed as temporal when 'vertically' above or below M(iddle) or P. When overlapping M or P, the manifestation is the "visitor" or "surprise" component noted in sections II and III. The other manifestation of D is the space-time one at the extreme ends of the diagram.

This sketch is very incomplete and is intended to be suggestive only. It does, however, underscore the lack of an adequate theory of language (one with a theory of deixis integrated with other language phenomena) without which any description of deixis will remain incomplete.

### NOTES

1. We wish to express again our gratitude to those individuals who have helped us to an understanding of their language: Andy Schooner, Margaret Siwallace, Felicity Walkus, and Charles Snow, and especially the last named for his enduring the bulk of much tedious questioning. Phonetic symbols are used with the following values: ʔ represents the glottal stop; ɬ is a voiceless, lateral fricative; ɬ̥ is a voiceless, lateral affricate; ɭ is used to indicate uvular articulation; ʔ indicates glottalization; and ʷ marks rounding of the preceding consonant.

2. The usual lexical categories of Noun, Verb, and Adjective are distinguishable within Bella Coola, but they are not important in determining what may function as Comment, Agent, etc. They function rather in explaining the way in which transformational rules have varying effects upon a given syntactic structure. The syntax of Bella Coola is discussed in more detail in Davis and Saunders (1973).

3. We use primarily Nouns that are Singular Nonfeminine in the sentence examples. The comments made of those samples hold for those sentences with Singular Feminine or Plural Nouns. For consistency of deictic reference, we assume all utterances occur within the Bella Coola reserve.

4. Adjectives and Verbs may occur with varying genders as indicated by the varying deictic affixes, e.g., *ti-ya-tx* 'the good one (male)' or *ci-ya-cx* 'the good one (female)'. This variation is predictable from the syntax. Such phrases as *tiyatx* are examples of restrictive modification. Nouns differ in that they do not function as Adjectives and Verbs do in this construction and hence may not vary in gender; *saɬ'a* 'canoe' is always *ti-saɬ'a-tx*, never \**ci-saɬ'a-cx* and so forth.

5. This Comment affix,  $k^w$ , is discussed along with others in Saunders and Davis (in preparation).

6. The 'knownness' and 'unknownness' may in turn be respectively linked to the familiarity of invisible Middle space, i.e., the area of settlement, and the unfamiliarity of Distal space beyond that area.

7. The Demonstrative suffixes of VI in (4) occur only in questions within discourse. For example, talking about someone dead a long time ago, one may ask 'Did that man live here?' The answer is given with the affixal set V. Since the referents of VI lie in Distal space and Distant Past time, the only gestural antecedent they may have is a linguistic, discourse one.

8. *WixH-* occupies a special position among the four Prepositions of Bella Coola. Its syntax is discussed in detail in Davis and Saunders (1974b).

9. The suffix *-naw* marks third person, plural, animate Agents of intransitive Comments; *8* marks all third person, singular Agents. This correctly implies that (55) and similar utterances are ambiguous; (55) is also glossed 'These (things) are good.'

10. The Verb *ʔayaH-* means 'to go/travel' without itself having a deictic component. The Comment suffix *-H-* and Proximal deixis on 'man' implies the motion was toward the speaker-listener since the action was observed in the Near Past and the Agent is now Proximal.

11. The expected *ʔaHʔac* does not occur. In its place we find *ʔaH-wa-ʔac* that morphophonemically results in *ʔalaʔac*.

12. The Preposition *x-* 'via' is further constrained in that it does not occur with Nouns of place; *ʔalasutnuʔac* replaces *\*x-a-sut-nu-ʔac* to mean not 'through your house [that we are now in]' but 'via/by' as via a path that runs alongside it. The Preposition *x-* does appear when nonplace Nouns are the Object, e.g., *x-ta-ʔimlkuks-t'aḡ^w* 'following those men.'

13. The suffix *-t* is not a purely deictic one; it is discussed in Davis and Saunders (in preparation).

14. The Preposition *ʔul-* has a variant *ʔūH-* that occurs in time expressions. The *t-l* alternation is that noted in footnote 11.

15. Sentences with the Comment suffixes *-ma* Conjectural, *-ck* Inferential, etc., are similarly correct. These are described in Saunders and Davis (in preparation).

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